

**REMARKS**

Attorney for applicants has carefully reviewed the outstanding Office Action on the above-referenced application. Applicants have amended Claims 1-20.

The Examiner has objected to the drawings. In response thereto, Claim 3 has been amended to remove the "approximately square area" feature.

Claims 4-20 have been objected to as being in improper form. In response thereto, Claims 4-18 have been amended to remove any improper claim dependencies.

Please note that applicants' attorney has not underlined the phrase "characterized in that" when amending the claims. Rather, the phrase "characterized in that" was underlined in the original claims. Applicants' attorney has deleted the phrase "characterized in that" in the amended claims.

Claims 1 and 2 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) or 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Cronk et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,327,983. Claim 3 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Cronk et al. reference. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for the following reasons.

The present invention, as recited in amended independent Claim 1, relates to a table, which includes a substructure, which is supported by legs (4,6) placed on a standing surface (S), and a tabletop (1) placed onto the substructure. As recited in amended Claim 1, the substructure is designed as an upwardly open trough (2) which is arranged below the tabletop (1), and the tabletop (1) is connected fixedly to the trough

(2), thus resulting in a sandwich-like construction with mutual reinforcement of the tabletop (1) and trough (2). The trough (2) includes a plurality of apertures (210) formed at spaced intervals along the longitudinal axis of the trough (2), each of the apertures (210) being sized and shaped so as to be suitable for receiving an attachable leg (4, 6). This allows the legs to be attachable to the table at selectable positions. Support for the amendment to Claim 1 can be found in at least the originally filed drawings (e.g., Fig. 1A).

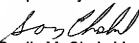
It is respectfully submitted that the Cronk et al. reference does not anticipate or make obvious the present invention as recited in amended independent Claim 1. For instance, the Cronk et al. reference discloses a conference table that includes a work surface 21 with an elongated opening 22 and an utility distribution system 2 that is positioned in the elongated opening 22. A U-shaped beam 36, which includes a trough 36, includes a bottom wall 37, sidewalls 38 and 39, and attachment flanges 40 and 41. As shown in FIG. 7 of the Cronk et al. reference, the leg 31 is attached to one end of the trough 36. The trough 36, as shown in FIG. 4A, includes solid sidewalls. The Cronk et al. reference fails to disclose or suggest a trough that includes a plurality of apertures formed at spaced intervals along the longitudinal axis of the trough, each of the apertures being sized and shaped so as to be suitable for receiving an attachable leg. Because utility modules 30 are positioned in the trough 36 disclosed in the Cronk et al. reference, it would be superfluous to modify the trough 36 to include apertures formed at space intervals along its sidewalls.

In the foregoing circumstances, it is respectfully submitted that amended Claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Because Claims 2-20 depend from amended Claim 1, they are also believed to be in condition for allowance. Nevertheless, applicants' attorney notes that the dependent claims recite additional novel features of the present invention. For instance, dependent claim 8 recites that the attached legs (4,6) apply force into the edge around the apertures (210), the apertures (210) being open and external, and external appliance apertures can be provided.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicants' attorney respectfully requests reexamination and allowance of pending Claims 1-3, and examination and allowance of Claims 4-20. If such action cannot be taken, the Examiner is cordially invited to place a telephone call to applicants' attorney in order that any outstanding issue may be resolved without the issuance of a further Office Action.

No fees are believed to be due as a result of the submittal of this Amendment. If any such fees are due, including extension and petition fees, the Examiner is hereby authorized to charge them to Deposit Account No. 503571.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
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